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ENZI INTRODUCES BILL TO PROTECT AMERICA'S SENIOR CITIZENS FROM FALLS

Washington D.C. – U.S. Senator Mike Enzi, R-WY, Chairman of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee (HELP Committee), today introduced the "Keeping Seniors Safe From Falls Act of 2007," an innovative bill designed to expand research on approaches to fall prevention and treatment for America's senior citizens.

"Anyone who has an older parent, relative or friend who lives alone knows about the concern that comes with an unanswered phone call," said Enzi. "For many of our nation's seniors, a fall means serious injury and is often the precursor to a rapid decline in health. This act will help to prevent falls and save lives."

"Education, prevention and early intervention will reduce the occurrences and costs of falls. This bill is an important step to securing the health and safety of America's seniors."

Falls represent a serious health risk for millions of older Americans. In the United States, one of every three persons age 65 and older falls each year. Falls are the leading cause of injury deaths and the most common cause of injuries and hospital admissions for trauma for older adults. In 2002, for example, almost 13,000 people over the age of 65 died as a result of fall-related injuries. Enzi said by the year 2030, as the baby boomer generation is added to the ranks of the elderly, the number of people over age 65 is expected to double, potentially doubling the number of elder falls.

"The Keeping Seniors Safe from Falls Act," will direct the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to oversee and support national and local education campaigns focusing on reducing falls among older adults and preventing repeat falls. The bill also calls for the Secretary of HHS to evaluate the effect of falls on health care costs, the potential for reducing falls, and the most effective strategies for reducing fall-related health care costs.

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